



Senator Rick Jones  
P.O. Box 30036  
Lansing, MI 48909-7536

**Regarding: Senate Bill 674**

Dear Senator Jones:

On behalf of the Washtenaw County Public Health Department, I would like to submit the following for public testimony regarding Senate Bill 674 introduced on November 12, 2013:

**Breastfeeding is recognized as the most nutritious way to feed infants and has many health benefits.** There is strong evidence that early infant feeding practices can affect a child's long-term growth and development. Breastfed infants gain the following advantages in life:

- Protection from infection and illness;
- Lower rates of asthma and obesity;
- and lower rates of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).

**Michigan currently ranks in the bottom 25% of all states (37<sup>th</sup> out of 50) in breastfeeding initiation rates, and Michigan did not meet the Healthy People 2010 objectives for breastfeeding.** The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life. In Michigan's WIC program, of mothers who start breastfeeding, only 17% are breastfeeding at six months. The Healthy People 2020 target for breastfeeding at six months is 61%.

**Breastfeeding is the economical choice for families and governments.** Families can save \$1,200-\$1,500 on formula in the first year of life by choosing to breastfeed. Nationally, if 90% of new mothers in the U.S. breastfed exclusively for six months the U.S. would save \$13 billion per year in medical and other expenses. In addition, more than 900 infant deaths would be prevented each year. (Source: Pediatrics, 2010).

**Senate Bill 674 would protect the right for mothers to breastfeed in Michigan.** Michigan is one of only five states that **does not** have a law specifically allowing women to breastfeed in any public or private location; forty-five states, the District of Columbia, and the US Virgin Islands have such laws.

We appreciate your attention to this bill at the December 10, 2013 public hearing.

Sincerely,

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Health Officer  
Washtenaw County Public Health

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